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Let's talk “Hybrid”



In the past months quite a few organizers have turned to Hybrid chess as the closest equivalent to OTB chess during the pandemic. ECU has organised two major events up to now (European Youth, September 2020 and European Qualification for the World Cup, May 2021), while a third one is on the way (European Youth 2021). Two affiliated events (Small Nations Championship 2021, Mitropa Cup 2021) were also of Hybrid format, while there have also been other important attempts, such as the European Hybrid Cities Cup.

If you are invited to be a local arbiter in a Hybrid event, there are a few things that you need to think in advance.

Hybrid is a new challenge for everyone, where many things may go wrong. It is your job to do your best to prevent them.

First of all, you should not be the only local arbiter in your venue. In the FIDE Online Regulations it is stated that two arbiters should be appointed in each venue (Local Chief and Local Technical Arbiter) with distinct duties. But even if you are not involved in a World event, this is a good practice to follow.

Just think that at some point you may need to leave the room, the players can by no means be left unattended!

While you are preparing for the event, you should make as many tests as possible and try to create real tournament conditions.

Test that the players' cameras and microphones are working, that they have downloaded the latest editions of their browsers and Video Conferencing System, that both the players and you know very well how to use them.

Test the network and measure the speed and stability. Play practice tournaments in the Hosting Internet Platform, even if the players are familiar with it. Ask them to use the same devices that they will be using on the actual day of the event and measure their performance.

Use short time control for the tests, as problems usually arise in time pressure.

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If you are looking for requirements and suggestions, you can find guides here:
https://www.europechess.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EWCQ_Venue_Guidelines.pdf

<https://www.europechess.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ECU-Hybrid-technical-reqirments.pdf>

Usually the players will want to use physical boards as well, at least for some part of the game. Explain to them the conditions under which they can use them (only to replicate the moves of the virtual board, not for analysis) and set up the playing hall in such a way that each player has enough space for the board and his/her playing device.

Inform the players about setting "move confirmation" to avoid misclicks and premoves, if they are allowed by the regulations.

Finally, during the event, be always in touch with the Chief Arbiter and Deputy Chief Arbiter of your team and pass on to the players their instructions.

You are on the front line, the first person that the players will turn to for guidance. On the other hand, whenever an issue arises, you should inform the CA and DCA immediately, even if it seems minor.

In the case of an internet disconnection in the venue or a power cut, let them know before you do anything else and wait for their instructions.

Good luck in your events!



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